



Consultative Forum Held to Fast-Track Realization of the Two-Thirds Gender Principle.



Consultative Forum on Two-Thirds Gender Principle at the Radisson Blu Hotel

Since the promulgation of the Constitution of Kenya in 2010, there have been several attempts to actualize the realization of the 2/3rd gender principle with no success. The attempts have failed mainly due to a lack of political goodwill to support legislation on the floor of Parliament.

Despite the setbacks, there is an opportunity that might help achieve this if the country's leadership lives up to its promise of making this a reality. Through a communique to the Senate and the National Assembly on 9th December 2022, the President of the Republic of Kenya sought interventions to address constitutional gaps towards implementing the two-thirds gender principle, among other issues. The communique proposes the need to harness views in a collaborative frame, resulting in the immediate and long-term realization of the two-thirds gender principle.

Kenya women leaders, through a consultative forum that was held on 23rd, February 2023, were optimistic that the commitment from the executive, if fully supported, would unlock the stalemate. The government has also established the Office of Advisor, Women's Rights Agency led by Hon. Harriet Chiggai, within the President's Executive Office, whose mandate is to enhance women's involvement, protection, and advancement.

"Regarding women in political decision-making, equality is still a dream yet to be realised. This meeting allows women leaders to discuss how to have more women represented in parliament and other leadership spaces." Hon. Harriette Chiggai, President's Advisor on Women's Rights.



Harriette Chiggai, President's Advisor on Women's Rights makes her remarks during the consultative forum.

ActionAid has not been left behind in this discourse. Through partnerships with other like-minded organisations, we advocated for implementing the 2/3rd gender principle through a popular initiative dubbed "Green Amendment Campaign"; through this campaign, we collected over 1.4 million signatures to champion women and youth to take up leadership. This is why ActionAid supported the consultative forum by Kenyan Women leaders, as it sets the stage for realizing this principle.



Susan Otieno, Executive Director ActionAid Kenya makes her remarks during the consultative forum.

"ActionAid recognizes that participation in political processes and leadership is crucial for women to influence local, county, and national decision-making. This meeting will pave the way for collective action to actualize this aspiration." Susan Otieno, Executive Director ActionAid International Kenya

The forum has set the stage for more other consultative meetings whose discussions will culminate into a bill to be tabled in parliament in the year. Once enshrined in the Constitution, the law will provide a lasting and sustainable solution to increased gender parity and women's empowerment. Additionally, it will ensure all organizations deliberate and continuous efforts to achieve gender-responsive leadership, governance, and development at all local and national levels. Secondly, it will provide a well-informed and empowered citizenry that understands the two-third gender principle. This will change Kenya's citizens' and stakeholders' attitudes, cultures, and behaviors toward gender inclusion.



Hon. Gladys Boss Shollei, Deputy Speaker National Assembly makes her remarks during the consultative forum.



Hon. Kimani Ichungwah, Leader of Majority Party in 13th Parliament makes his remarks during the consultative forum.

Women Rights Networks from Isiolo and Garissa Counties Engage the Anti-FGM Board on Ending FGM.

According to the Kenya Demographic Health Survey 2022, the prevalence of Female Genital Mutilation declined from 38% in 1998 to 15% in 2022. Despite this progress, more concerted efforts are needed for Kenya to achieve the ICPD25 Promise of Zero Gender-Based Violence and harmful traditional practices like FGM.



Participants at the consultative Forum between Women Rights Networks from Isiolo and Garissa Counties with the Anti-FGM Board.

ActionAid Kenya through the Girl Generation: Support to the Africa-Led Movement to End FGM/C Programme strategically engages women's rights networks from Isiolo and Garissa counties to act as champions and agents of change within their communities and help in ending Female Genital Mutilation. The ALM programme is girl-centred, where girls are placed at the heart of the programme design, implementation, and evaluation.

To highlight the programme's and women's rights efforts to end FGM/C, we organized a consultative forum between the rights groups and the Anti-FGM board to share ideas and challenges and agree on how best to strengthen partnerships between communities and the government through the board in realizing the goal to end FGM/C.

The workshop was organized on 27th February 2023. During the meeting, women from the two counties highlighted some of the challenges they face in fighting for

the rights of the girl child. Some of their concerns ranged from lack of support from the local administration in protecting girls from undergoing the cut and challenges accessing justice for survivors through prosecution of perpetrators and enablers.

"As a representative of women, we face various challenges, especially protecting girls from undergoing FGM due to lack of support from local administrators and cultural leaders in protecting girls from FGM and seeking justice for survivors. We request that the board looks into how perpetrators can be prosecuted as a lesson to others who are supporters or enablers of the vice." Stated Amina Lilian from Isiolo Voice of Women.

Her sentiments were shared by Kamuthe Women's Group counterparts from Fafi, Garissa County.



Amina Lilian from Isiolo Voice of Women shares her experience.

Speaking at the workshop, the Chief Executive Officer of the AntiFGM Board, Mrs. Bernadette Loloju assured the women's rights networks of the board support in ensuring that FGM is eradicated.

"Matters relating to the rights of women and girls are close to my heart and are a top priority for the board. We endeavor to ensure that FGM is rooted out by working together with organizations like those represented here. Indeed, you are the light of the society, and we will ensure that your voice is heard." Stated Mrs Bernadette Loloju C.E.O Anti-FGM Board.



The AntiFGM Board, Chief Executive Officer Mrs Bernadette Loloju makes her remarks during the forum.

Through the consultative forum, we explored and agreed on areas of partnership and collaboration to ensure that we reduce entirely cases of FGM/C in these two counties. Ending FGM is part of ActionAid's broader vision of a world where women and girls have greater access to and control over their bodies, sexuality, and reproductive health.



Maka Kassim from Kamuthe Women's Right Network speaks during the forum.

Advancing Climate Policies through Climate Inclusive Budgeting at the County Level.

Members of County Assembly (MCAs) are the decision makers for funds allocated to the implementation of projects within the county. Therefore, strengthening their knowledge of climate-inclusive budgeting helps them to appreciate their role in advancing the implementation of climate-related policies in the county assemblies.



A member of the County Assembly from Baringo County speaks during the workshop.

ActionAid International Kenya, through the Gender Responsive Alternatives for Adaptation to Climate Change project, organised a two-day workshop for Members of County Assembly (MCAs), their committees and County Executives Committee (CECs)

members from Baringo County. The workshop sought to build their understanding of their role in responding to the climate challenge through better budgeting and formulating regulations that integrate climate change impact reduction for vulnerable communities.



Members of Baringo County Assembly and ActionAid team at the Gender Responsive Alternatives for

The project facilitated an expert from the Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Forestry who enlightened the MCAs on how their role can bring change in the community. "You (MCAs) hold a lot of influence in the assembly; I urge you to use that influence to lessen the burden of your communities as a result of climate change. In Baringo County, where you come from, prioritization of water harvesting is critical in reducing impacts of drought" Michael Okumu- Deputy Director, Climate Change

Negotiations and Finance Climate Change Directorate, Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Forestry.



Michael Okumu- Deputy Director, Climate Change Negotiations and Finance Climate Change Directorate, Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Forestry makes a presentation during the workshop.

The workshop:

1. Helped the leaders to understand the links between climate change and the budget process.
2. Equipped the members with requisite skills to prepare and respond to climate shocks.
3. Guided them in identifying climate change-related risks in the county and available opportunities to build adaptive communities.
4. Enabled them to understand how climate change-related risks can affect public

finance, including the effectiveness of sectoral investments.

5. Enabled them to develop cost-benefit analysis to optimize sectoral budgeting under changing climate.

"The workshop has enabled us to understand climate related issues which previously was conflicting. We are now well equipped and can prioritize climate related policies that will help cushion our communities from the effects of climate change" stated a Member of the County Assembly from Baringo County

The Gender Responsive Alternatives for Adaptation to Climate Change project is funded by Australian Aid. The project aims to strengthen women's capacity in resilience building, supporting women-led protection mechanisms, modeling community climate resilient livelihood systems and engaging duty at County and national government level.



Members of the County Assembly in a discussion with the Project Coordinator Lucy Ntongai

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